

Hamilton Field, Temporary Base Theater
(Facility No. 493)
Southeast side of 11th Street
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-CM

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
ICM-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD
Temporary Base Theater
(Facility No. 493)

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Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Temporary Base Theater
Facility No. 493 (southeast side of 11th Street [the entrance is on 11th, not San Pablo])

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

Because of the specialized interior of the temporary theater, this building was not demolished like many others in the area, but instead was moved to its present site from an adjacent lot in 1964. It continued to be used as an auditorium and youth center until base closure in 1974.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

The temporary theater building is a one and one-half story frame barrack unit with a concrete foundation, composition gable roof with exposed rafters, and six- over six-light double hung wood sash windows along the first story only. Smaller windows are in the upper portion of the building in either end to provide illumination to the stage and projection booth areas on the interior. An elevated central wood panel door is located at the stage end of the building, and a set of wood stairs leads up to it. Double panel doors provide entry at the other end. Concrete steps lead to a landing at this entry. The entry and landing are covered by a flat projecting roof supported by metal posts.

The interior contains one large room with an elevated stage at the south end. The walls are gypsum and the floors are tongue and groove wood covered with eight-inch-square vinyl asphalt tiles. A few original "Schoolhouse" type lights, suspended from the ceiling, are present but most lights are fluorescent with circular tubes suspended on cables from the ceiling beams. The northeast corner of the theater (near the lobby) has a double metal sink

**HAMILTON FIELD
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HABS No. CA-2398-CM Page 2

with stainless steel counters. The sink is made by "Youngtown Kitchen." A stove hood is mounted on the wall next to the sink. A serving counter completes this snack bar area.

The stage is wood and has several small changing rooms. In addition, small bathrooms, containing a flush-valve "Standard" toilet and wall-mounted sink are next to each changing room. A main latrine, with several toilets divided by wood stall partitions, and two sinks is in the back of the theater. A projection room, reached by a wood stair case from the rear of the theater, is above the front entrance. It has a large opening, wood floor, and acoustical tile ceiling. The theater was moved to this location from a nearby lot in the same housing area in 1964.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

This facility was completed in 1942 and served as an auxiliary theater to accommodate the increased base population. It was converted to a Youth Center in 1957, a use it maintained until base closure in 1974. It has been vacant since base closure.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

See the project Field Record, roll 42, exposures 5-8; roll 44, exposures 3-4, 7-10; roll 64, exposures 1-6; and roll 65, exposures 1-2.

The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

**HAMILTON FIELD
Temporary Base Theater
(Facility No. 493)**

HABS No. CA-2398-CM Page 3

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

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Date prepared: July 1995

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